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Gardening 101
New feature series starts.
See story page 2.

Pandemic perspective.
Seeing fandom in a new light.
See editorial on page 6.

Highlands resident Belinda Gallagher photographed what she said is a "sharp-shinned hawk - an early returning migrant." These hawks leave Canada in the autumn for the south to the subtropics. The hawk's habitat includes "mixed or coniferous forests, open deciduous woodlands, thickets, edges." Source www.audubon.org. /Submitted by Belinda Gallagher

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Annuals, perennials, biennials, oh my!

A new series on gardening by Belinda Gallagher.

THE TWO most asked questions during my many years as a Master Gardener were, "How do I make my wisteria bloom?" and "What's the difference between an annual and a perennial plant?"

The answer to the first is a long discussion of temperature, location, species and dud plants – a conversation for another day. The second answer will set us on an exploration of plants. Over the next few months, I hope to unravel some of the mystery, simplify some definitions and eradicate any fear of that big, green, gardening world.

BELINDA GALLAGHER

Plants 101

The popularity of gardening is not new, nor is the interest in plants. There are 5,000-year-old records in China documenting the botanical (dried and pressed) collection of roses and the pharaohs of ancient Egypt are credited with the first organized live-plant exploration in 2,000 BCE. Around 1400 BCE, Queen Hatshepsut sent ships to a region of Africa (now Somalia), to secure exotic trees used for incense. These early collectors knew that, despite what you see on HGTV, a garden is not a garden without plants.

Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew, estimates that there are about 391,000 species of plants on Earth. We use a mere handful in the cultivated (prepared and maintained) spaces around us.

In today's parlance, all plants are perennials – unless they are not. 'Perennial' is generally defined as a plant that lives in more than two growing seasons. There are woody perennials – trees, shrubs and some vines - whose above ground parts last through the winter and start growing again in the spring. There are also herbaceous perennials that have no permanent woody stem above the ground. Most of the non-woody perennials that we grow here in Haliburton County will die back to ground level for the winter with the roots surviving to re-sprout in the spring.

Annuals and biennials are also herbaceous (non-woody) plants, but they have shorter life cycles than perennials. An annual will live for one growing season from the sprouting of the seed to the production of flowers, then seeds for the next year. Biennials split the difference, completing their life cycle over two seasons. A biennial will spend the first growing season producing roots, stems and leaves. They flower, produce seed and then die in the second season.

You may ask why this matters. The main reason is the bloom time. And flower blooms are all about attracting pollinators so that the plant can reproduce.

Perennials last for many years and therefore do not need to rush making blooms. They also don't need to expend lots of energy having blooms over the whole season. That is why most perennial plants flower for only a couple of weeks each season. Think of the lovely peony in your garden, covered in lush blossoms, but only for seven to 10 days (or the first major rain storm). You can get a longer show by planting several different varieties so the blooming period overlaps, but each individual will only flower for a short time. So too, other garden favourites like delphinium, veronica and iris. On the plus side, the peony will likely outlive you.

An image of a Biennial hollyhock. Submitted by Belinda Gallagher

There are some perennials that bloom longer, or have blooms that fade to a dried flower or bract, and appear to last for more than a week or two. Salvia is a good example.

The most recognized biennials are foxgloves, Sweet William, hollyhocks, and tall, yellow, roadside mullein. Recall that they work on roots and leaves in the first season, so are merely green blotches in the garden. However, these plants flower profusely in the second season in order to attract as many pollinating insects as possible. The plants set LOTS of seed for the next growing season. The resulting baby plants in the third season will need to be thinned to allow for good growth and air circulation. English country gardens relied on biennials for the dramatic flowering. Over time, some seed will wait an extra year to sprout and you will have both flowering plants and green plants at the same time.

Finally, the annuals. An annual plant completes the entire life cycle in one growing season and relies on the seed produced to ensure the future of the species. This is a big deal so the plant expends a lot of energy on blooms. Not only are the blooms showy or fragrant, but there are many of them over a long period of time. The annual plant does not want to miss any opportunity in attracting a bee, butterfly, bird or other pollinator. Fine examples of these self-seeding plants include cosmos, cleome, marigolds, calendula and zinnias. It is also worth noting that almost all of the vegetables we grow are annuals.

As with any topic, there are exceptions. There are short-lived perennials, sub-shrubs and 'tender' perennials. These will be the fodder for next time.

County Life

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Ice, Ice Baby!

ALISON SQUIRE
Haliburton County Master Gardener

The coldest month of the year is upon us. Embrace the chill, have some fun, and add a pop of colour to your winter garden! Entertaining for children and adults, this project has endless combinations and design opportunities. Get creative and let your imagination run wild!

Winter garden ornaments

Place evergreens, pine cones, cranberries, oranges, etc into a freezable container. To hang your ice ornament, embed ribbon or twine. Add one to two inches of water and leave it outside to freeze. Once frozen, remove your creation from the container and dangle it in a tree, outside the window or from a railing. Wildlife will enjoy the fruit as the ice slowly evaporates.

Ice Sculptures

Stack smaller frozen pieces to make an ice sculpture! Spray with warm water to freeze pieces together.

Iced Heart

Crush ice in your blender and add beet juice or red food colouring. Use your hands to sculpt a heart shape on a cookie sheet and re-freeze. Freeze water in another large pan as your base. When both your heart and base are frozen, spray with warm water to freeze them together. Happy Valentine's Day!

Fire and Ice

Nothing beats a roaring winter bonfire on a starry night. Add a touch of elegance with iced tealights! For your mould, fill a large container with water. Nest a smaller container inside and place into it a heavy object to displace the water. The smaller container will make a hole where your candle will go. Once frozen, remove the weight and use warm water to loosen the two moulds, then add your candle. Feeling ambitious? Go crazy, and create a magical fire and ice pathway to welcome your guests!

Haliburton County Master Gardeners is a volunteer organization that provides horticultural advice specific to Haliburton and surrounding regions. Have your gardening questions answered or schedule an onsite consultation at www.haliburtonmastergardener.ca

Fun with ice! Creative combinations to brighten your winter garden, celebrate Valentine's Day, and enhance your winter bonfire. Photos submitted by Alison Squire

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You think you got it rough?

JANET TRULL
Special to County Life

My grandmother didn't power walk or lift weights or ski. But I never doubted that she was strong. Tough in ways I didn't understand, she lived by a code of good manners, good posture, and a stiff upper lip. Whining was strictly forbidden.

Born in the 1890s, her childhood was a vague and mysterious era without cars or electricity. A terrible war raged through her teenage years. Her father died of tuberculosis. In the kitchen. During dinner.

"Don't let that food go to waste," her mother said before sending one of the kids to get the coroner. Nana left Paisley, Scotland with her brother and emigrated to Canada just in time to be hospitalized with the flu. As she was recovering, she helped out. There was a nursing shortage (sound familiar?), so she offered water to thirsty patients and put her cool hand on fevered brows. The matron noticed.

"How would you like to be a nurse?" she asked. Nana said, "Sure. Why not?"

She had no other plans.

Nana had a year or two of fun in the Roaring Twenties. She and her nursing friends would dress up on Saturday nights and sneak in the side door of the King Edward Hotel in downtown Toronto. There would always be a party. Food and drink and music and handsome fellas. One of her friends had a cabin way up north on Eagle Lake where she was invited one magical summer. A pristine wilderness so similar to the hills of Scotland. Imagine!

Ted Pickels, from left, Kathleen Pickels, Dora Gatecliff, Zella MacGlashan, Olive Pickels and Joyce Trull at a wee cottage called, The Nook circa 1940 at Gull Lake. Submitted by Janet Trull

By strange coincidence, other ancestors were building cabins on Gull Lake and Kashagawigamog Lake. The die was cast for ongoing generations of Haliburton County cottagers.

The original cottages were one step above camping in a tent, simple sanctuaries to escape the heat of city summers (before air conditioning came along to punch holes in the ozone and make things worse). No running water. A curtain across the bedroom door.

So, I can't help but wonder what Nana and the other grandparents would make of Haliburton in 2022. If they could sit once more beside their beloved lakes. Still beautiful. Stroll along Highland Street. Still charming. Pick up a copy of the *Haliburton County Echo*. Still publishing local news.

The grandparents loved the *Echo*. Articles would be read aloud. What band was playing at the Golden Slipper? What movie was showing at the Molou in Haliburton or the Beaver in Minden? Who won the big prize at the Rotary Summer Carnival?

A local newspaper is an important public service, and although the news can't always be positive, it would gladden Nana's heart to know there are still schoolchildren raising money for important causes, musings of local poets, and photos of highland vistas. The villages that make up Haliburton County are full of good news stories about neighbours helping neighbours, especially in hard times. Our local papers remind us how lucky we are to live in a community connected by people who care.

So, no, Nana. I'm not whining. I wouldn't dream of it.

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Chaga explained by area forager with upcoming session

The ins and outs of a fungi with a fun guy

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Yours Outdoors

What's round, brown, and appears in abundance in the forests of Haliburton Highlands? Chaga. Obviously. This may be a term you have heard of before, but are still leary of, which is very understandable. After all, you know what any great mycologist says, "You can eat everything … at least once."

Chaga is a whole different ball game, though.

"[Chaga] has been shown to support and strengthen our immune system, provide anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, and antiviral benefits, support heart health, gut health, promote good digestion, and reduce inflammation of the intestinal tract—to name just a few," Stephan Lukacic, instructor for Chaga 101, as offered by Yours Outdoors said.

Lukacic, an avid forager, has been using fungus medicinally since 2016. He notes that when chaga first became a buzz-word, he was living overseas, and it was not until he moved back to the Haliburton Highlands that he really dove into the science, studies, and secrets of the chaga world.

Many have seen chaga before in the area, without even realizing it.

"I've spent a lot of time researching and reading about chaga and other medicinal mushrooms, and a lot of time out in the forest learning to accurately identify them," Lukacic says.

Chaga often grows on birch trees in a large seashell shape, and ranges in colour from light tan to dark black. In recent years, it has been observed as a "super food," providing energy that is not rooted in caffeine, and jam-packed full of antioxidants.

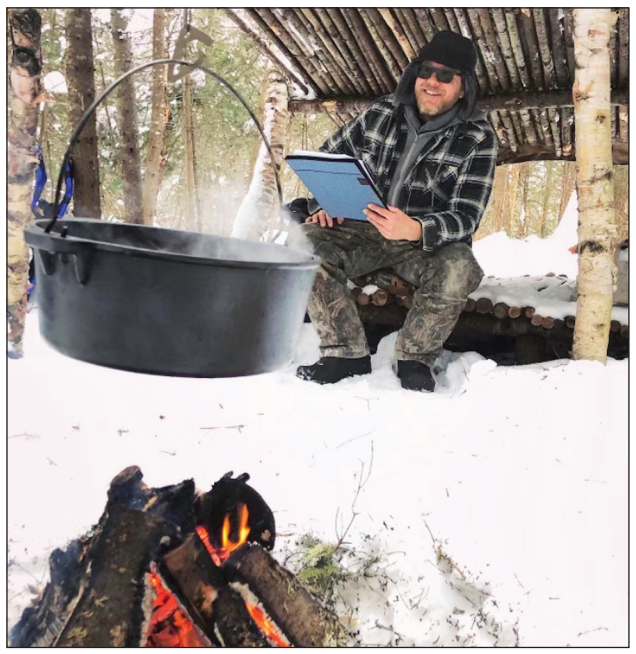
"I started out being extremely skeptical about the purported health benefits of this crazy black fungus thing that literally grows on trees!" Lukacic says.

Examples of chaga.

"Science and data are finally beginning to prove what our aboriginal ancestors and ancient cultures around the northern hemisphere have known for centuries ... the chaga fungus contains a wealth of good medicine when used safely and appropriately!"

Lukacic will be teaching Chaga 101 at Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve on Feb. 20. The intention of the course is to focus on the benefits, sustainability, and identification of chaga. He notes that while chaga grows in abundance in our area, the recent spike in global interest has made it vulnerable to overharvesting, and the core of this hands-on course is sustainability and respect for the land.

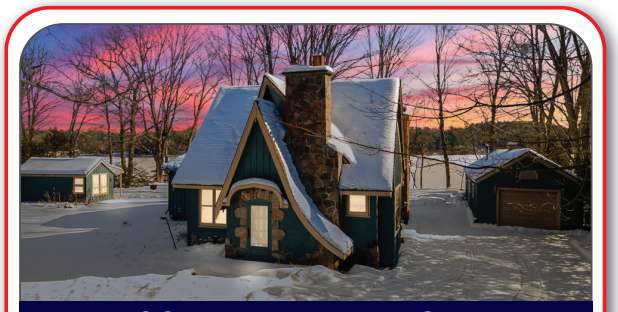
The course will be set up as an outdoor lesson; around a campfire with specimens of chaga for the lesson, a small hike into the woods to search for samples, and then a chaga tea tasting at the end. Guests are welcome to bring their own snowshoes for the hiking portion, then stay on the Haliburton Forest property afterwards to check out one of their many trails via snowshoe.



Stephan Lukacic will be providing information on the fungi, chaga with Chaga 101, as offered by Yours Outdoors. Photos submitted by Stephan Lukacic.

It is important to note that people should consult with their doctor or healthcare professional when consuming any herbal supplement, and this includes chaga. If you are looking to learn more about chaga, head over to www.yoursoutdoors.ca and look up Chaga 101. The next available date for the course is Feb. 20, and it is filling up quickly!

Going for a walk, learning new things, and trying something different; sometimes the greatest opportunities for health and wellness are right in your backyard.



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Giving up leaderboard statistics for daily case count charts

A sports follower reflects on how the pandemic has changed fandom and what the future might hold

SYEPHEN PETRICK
Special to *County Life*

Like many a sports fan, I know about ERA (Earned Run Average) and GAA (Goals Against Average). I've perused over stats about winning percentages and shooting percentages. I've read debates about who should be an MVP or considered a GOAT (that's Greatest of All Time). It's all trivial, but it makes life interesting.

Two years ago it all changed. I stopped scanning sports websites for insights on, say, the Ottawa Senators' playoff chances and in turn started staring at numbers about the novel coronovirus's advances.

A daily habit that was once fun, w as numbing. I filled my instinct to process numbers by looking at Italy's daily case count and comparing it to ours. Time I might have otherwise spent thinking about who might slip into the top seed in the East, was now about projecting when the death rate might peak. Looking at leaderboard stats gave way to searching up COVID-19 line graphs and daily case count charts.

More than a few pundits have ranted about the true purpose of following sports; it's to distract us from the mundane and to give us something to be excited and hopeful about, even if its results are inconsequential. That's why watching virtually every sports league come to halt in the spring of 2020 was hard and why their eventual return, by summer, was welcomed by millions of exuberant fans.

But I wasn't one of them.

For reasons I'm not sure I understand, I haven't been able to resume caring about sports to a fraction of what I once did. Maybe that's because it now seems too inconsequential compared to everything else.

In 2019, I held my breath with every free throw, as the Toronto Raptors went on to become NBA (National Basketball Association) champs. Last year, I didn't read a single box score during their sabbatical season in Tampa Bay, Florida. Every Christmas, I used to be in awe over the skill showcased by teenagers at the World Junior Hockey Championships. This year, when Omicron upended the tournament halfway through I couldn't have cared less. Why were they even having it in the first place I thought?

At the start of the pandemic, you saw social media messages stating that everyday people like grocery store workers and truck drivers were now more important than sports' biggest stars. And it was true! Then, as the strife of the pandemic highlighted incredible inequalities, sports figures started speaking out. As a Raptors fan, Lebron James has broke my heart on the court, but I'll forever admire him for being an advocate for Black Americans. And the rival Milwaukee Bucks did something spectacular while playing in the 2020 bubble; they refused to play a game until lawmakers in their state addressed the zealous police shooting of Jacob Blake.

The pandemic has also helped highlight athletes who are really worth celebrating and those who fit the old stereotype of being selfish. NFL (National Football League)

quarterback Aaron Rodgers and tennis champ Novak Djokovic accomplished nothing with their insistence on being unvaccinated and saw their hero statuses dim.

Despite the fanless arenas we've seen in Canadian NHL cities this winter, the sports world is slowly slipping back to its pre-pandemic existence – and in more sports-mad countries like the United States it's already there. But what will the pandemic's legacy on big league sports be?

Assuming I'm not the only one who has re-examined life's priorities, sports teams will have to not take their fans' loyalties for granted (that's something they do, right Toronto Maple Leafs fans?). Moreover, they'll need to market their stars as good people (that's something they already do, but could get better at). And they'll have to present the sports they play as an example of how to live healthy.

A new generation of kids are growing up with different heroes and different hobbies than those in the past; a trend that's only heightened by the fact that opportunities for children to play and learn new sports has been limited in the past two years. My own boys can't tell you that Connor McDavid is the best hockey player in the world, but they can tell you how many subscribers Mr. Beast has on YouTube.

And if the corny TV commercials are true, we're all now re-evaluating what's really important and trying to find fulfillment in simple backyard joys. My own

see page 7

Top 10 reasons I don't want to be a superhero

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

I DON'T KNOW about you, but when I was a kid I always wanted to be a superhero. Fortunately, as I matured, I started to see that there were a lot of reasons why this option wouldn't be the best career path for me. Here are my top 10 reasons why.

1. Too hard to find a phone booth to change in.
2. The COVID-30 has made my tights a lot less flattering.
3. Too short to wear a cape.
4. Would keep having to ask my grandchildren to explain how to use utility belt technology.
5. I prefer to settle conflicts without throwing cars.
6. Can't stand being on call all the time.
7. The market is already saturated.
8. X-Ray vision could be a problem in the Me Too era.
9. The League of Justice way too competitive.
10. My only superpower is consuming pizza.

Flurry

Trees, standing, calligraphic, in the Snow,
across from hills, swallowed by the squall,
a flurry of snowflakes swirling through Air, bleaching Sky, the colour of bone.
A lone seagull screeches as Wind flings its wings,
as they struggle to flap through the storm,
circling up in the Air, without flying anywhere,
suspended in space as Wind and Snow alter the path of its flight,
grounding the gull that circles once more,
before it swoops down to land on a hillock of Snow,
near where the old willow used to grow, before it was felled by Wind,
not so long ago, its stump bandaged by Snow.
I watch the fleck of seagull perch in the Snow,
wondering about the rest of its flock,
whether they're all huddled somewhere, their feathers nestled against the storm,
whether the seagull got lost in the flurry while trying to wing its way Home.
I blink at the movement in the Snow,
this lone bird enlivening the buried landscape,
the boundary between Sky and Lake, blotted by Snow.
Wind sculpting waves in the Snow, like dunes in a desert,
and for a moment, a flash of nostalgia, rushes through me,
as I watch the summer bird wobble in the Snow,
before a wall of Wind bashes into me, and I shudder,
winter battering my spirit that quivers beneath layers of sweater and fleece and flesh.
The wings of the seagull thrash in the Air, attempting to take flight,
Wind hurling it to and fro, as I watch the duel between bird and Wind,
hoping that the invisible force doesn't win,
as I stray from the path, plodding towards the row of trees,
overlooking the Lake, that's sealed beneath its ceiling of ice, its roof of Snow.
I stand in the space between the trees,
listening to the seagull squawk as it tries again,
lifting its wings, higher, into the storm, resisting the force of Wind,
that attempts to trap its wings in the Air, without flying anywhere,
how its voice, shrieks, how its wings flap, relentless, through the storm,
as I watch, a speck on the shore,
rooting for the seagull 'till it's swallowed by the flurry whirling all around it,
snowflakes grazing the feathers of its wings,
as they carry it Home.

Sylvie Kalenda

Glebe Park perspective
Highlands resident Vivian Collings captured this night scene of the Village of Haliburton taken from Glebe Park on Jan. 31. /Submitted by Vivian Collings

On track to discovery
Rick Whittatker points out animal tracks in the fresh layer of snow on the ground during Snowshoe Snowdon on Monday, Jan. 31 in the Township of Minden Hills. Whittaker guided participants on a two-hour walking tour of Snowdon Park. / NICK BERNARD Staff

A group of snowshoers go-off trail at Snowdon Park on Jan. 31. T This outing was the first of three snowshoe adventures offered through Minden Hills. The next event is Discover the Dahl on Feb 14 at the Dahl Forest. The cost is $10. Register by emaililng Elisha Weiss at eweiss@mindenhills.ca.

Getting outside makes sense

from page 6

work as a reporter filling these pages has me hearing that local activities such as snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are perhaps more popular now than ever before. I believe it. Life has thrown so many daggers at us lately, so who wouldn't want to take up a new hobby and find enjoyment with being with friends and family outdoors?

And, likewise, who now would want to waste time on the trivial and dumb? It pains me to say that the one sport I love so deeply to still follow well, baseball, isn't likely to start on time this year. Major League Baseball (MLB) team owners have been locking out their players since December, threatening the timely start to the regular season in April.

Despite all the hardships in the world, there's a sports work stoppage in a league where the average annual player salary was about $3.89 million in 2020 according to the MLB Players' Association and the average value of a franchise is estimated at $1.9 billion according to statista.com .

Should the season go ahead, Toronto Blue Jays superstar Vladimir Guererro Jr. will likely challenge to be named MVP – that means Most Valuable Player. But it could all be for naught because of what I'll call the DLDE – Dumbest Labour Dispute Ever.

Editor's note: *Earned Run Average is a statistic that measures a baseball pitcher's effectiveness, obtained by calculating the average number of runs allowed per nine innings. Goals Against Average is a statistic that measures a hockey goaltender's effectiveness, obtained by calculating the average number of goals allowed per game.*

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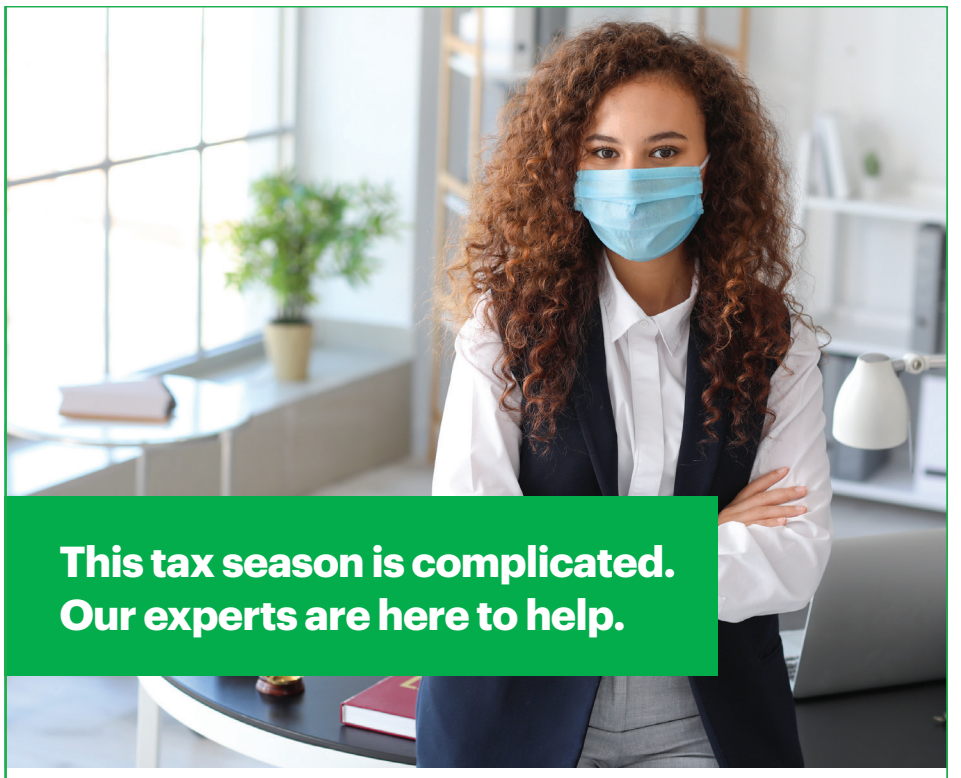

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Get to know the Huskies: Nathan Porter

Haliburton County Huskies captain Nathan Porter disrupts a rush during a game against the Toronto Jr. Canadiens in December. Porter is a player with strong family roots. He has appreciated the support of fans and has embraced the community./FILE DARREN LUM Staff

ALEX GALLACHER

Special to *County Life*

In his fourth season in the OJHL (Ontario Junior Hockey League), Nathan Porter has been a staple member of the Huskies leadership team. Spending two seasons in Pickering and two seasons with the Whitby Fury/Haliburton County Huskies, Porter has amassed a total of 51 points (16 goals and 35 assists) in his career. The first ever captain in Huskies history has come a long way since his humble beginnings.

Porter has been a hockey guy his whole life, the sport being in his blood. His father, a defenceman, got him skating at a very young age. Since then he has fallen in love with the sport.

"I've been a hockey guy and my dad is a defenceman," Porter mentioned. "He grew me up with skates, we'd always have a backyard rink. I'm from Whitby so I'm fortunate that hockey is very well known there, it wasn't very hard for me to lace up the skates."

Starting out in AAA with the Whitby Wildcats, Porter was teammates with current Huskies player Christian Stevens as well as 2020 Winnipeg Jets 10th overall pick Cole Perfetti. Graduating to the OJHL, Porter put up 10 points in his first season and 11 in his second. Moving to Whitby for 2019, Porter put up 19 points and was named to the 2020 CJHL (Canadian Junior Hockey League) Prospects Game. Although his first three seasons might not have been as good he wanted, it was still a great time in his eyes.

"I played with some really good guys in Pickering," Porter said. "One of my teammates there was actually drafted to the Boston Bruins. In 2020, I was part of the CJHL Prospects Game which was really fun. We didn't have much success there, never making it out of the first round. However, I think that will change this year with Haliburton County."

Remaining with the Fury after the decision to relocate to the Minden, Porter was ecstatic about the fan support in the county. Playing in front of an empty barn is never fun, but for Porter seeing the jerseys and merchandise in the crowd is something that is surreal to him but more than welcome.

When he came to the county, coach Ryan Ramsay made the decision to name Porter the first captain in team history. Being the first time in his OJHL career that he ever wore a letter, Porter has made the most of the leadership responsibilities that come along with the title.

"It's a dream come true for me to have a letter," continued Porter. "I've been around the league for a while and I know Ryan and myself get along really well. Being there for the younger guys and being their role-model is really fun. You're always the first one to hear it from the coach after a bad game, but you have a lot of good pressure on you. Guys look to you for what to do next, you got a lot of eyes on your back but it's been a lot of fun so far."

With the OJHL coming back after a brief shutdown in January as well as missing the entire 2020-21 season, the players in the league have had it extremely tough. All these players want to do is just be on the ice and with the pandemic it hasn't been easy. However, the team is very close-knit and during the shutdown the guys managed to find many ways to keep themselves sane and occupied during this time.

"Being up here in Haliburton, it's not too hard to find some ice." Porter continued. "You can walk out to the lake, shovel it off and play a few hours outside. We've been gaming, and working out when we can. It's been tough but being insuch a great community, it's been a lot of help."

Porter wears No.77 on the ice, and that number carries a lot of meaning. A lot of players choose their numbers off of players they look up to, but for Porter he chose his based off of his family.

"My dad grew up playing with it," Porter said. "When I made a team I had to pick No.4 because 77 was taken. So this season, Ryan called me up and told me that I could change my jersey number. It's my last year so I wanted to end it where it started and I picked 77."

Being from Whitby, Porter's family does their best to attend as many games as they can. Usually coming once or twice a week, and occasional away games. The support from his family has been a big help for Porter this season.

After the OJHL, Porter hasn't decided 100 per cent what he wants to do with his career. There are a few options he is considering such as playing hockey for an American university in the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) NCAA Division III or playing hockey for a Canadian university in U Sports in Canada, keeping all the opportunities open.

Regardless of what he does, Porter knows hockey will be in his life in some way. The sport has given him so much and he will never let that go, as the season gets back underway look for Porter to be leading the team to the playoffs.

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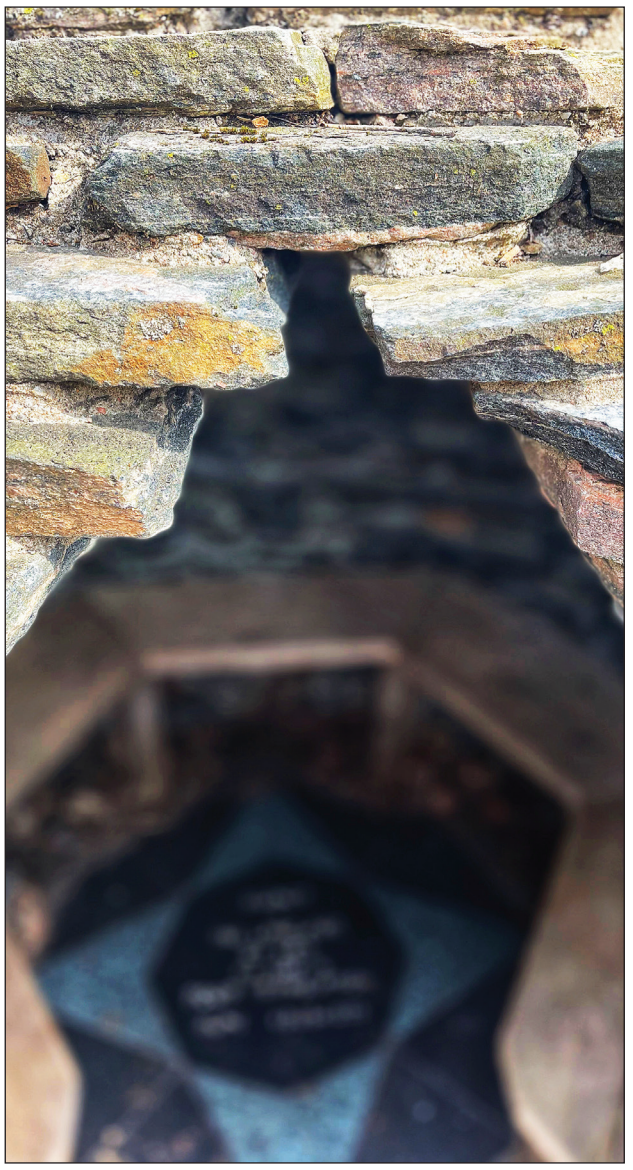
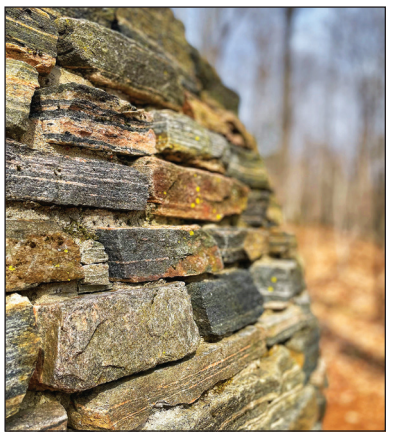
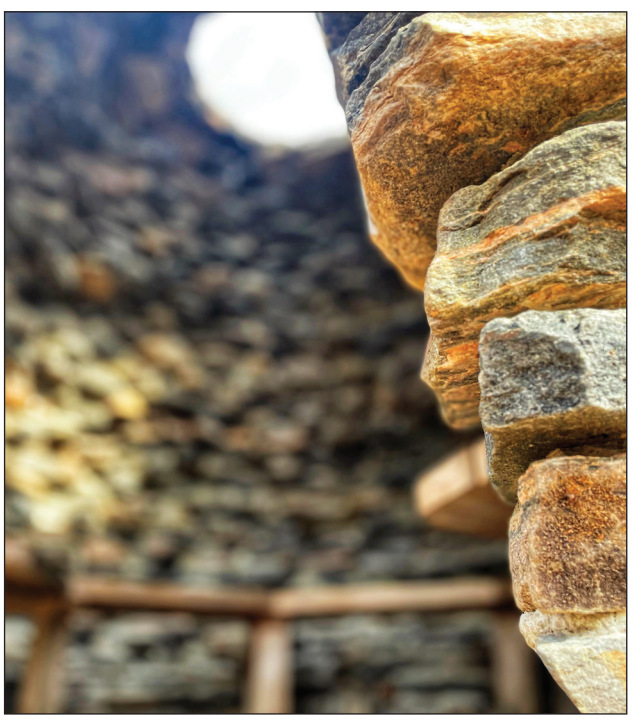
Local Landmark Mystery

Local Landmark reveal: St Peter's Anglican Church.This lovely stone church with it's iconic stone fence sits on the shores of Maple Lake. Made from local materials by a congregation member and skilled stone mason, John Henry Billing, the stone church replaced the original wooden building in 1905. Mr Billing, who apprenticed in England, built and designed many stone houses and other structures in the area. It is believed that he designed, but did not build, the St. Steven's Church at Boshkung. Local legend is that he showed up to work on the St. Steven's Church only to find that they had already laid the foundation. The story goes that he refused to build on another man's foundation, packed up his tools, and went home. Sometimes called the "Brides Church" because so many wedding have happened there, this lovely building and the cemetary adjacent are a well known landmark and a beloved place of worship for it's congregation. The building is in remarkablly good shape, a testament to the dedication of it's congregation and the skill of it's original construction. Republished with permission from by Thom Lambert. Originally posted to the myhaliburtonhighlands page on Instagram.





The following are images of a local landmark. Try to guess what the landmark is and see in the next week's *County Life* for the reveal. Concept and images from Thom Lambert, who has informative posts about things to see and do in the Highlands through Myhaliburtonhighlands on Instagram. /Submitted by Thom Lambert



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Nature in your backyard

Highlands resident Belinda Gallagher photographed what she believes is a "coyote or eastern wolf (coyowolf) or some hybrid". /Submitted by Belinda Gallagher

From a photo taken in September 2018, Highlands resident Richard Sharpe shows the sunflower he grew from a seed starter kit, which started life indoors in February and then was taken outside and grew more than 10 feet he wrote.

Right, from the archives of Highlands resident Richard Sharpe, fungi growth on dead oak stump. Sharpe took theimage while out looking for images to capture on Sept. 23 last year behind his home. /Submitted by Richard Sharpe.

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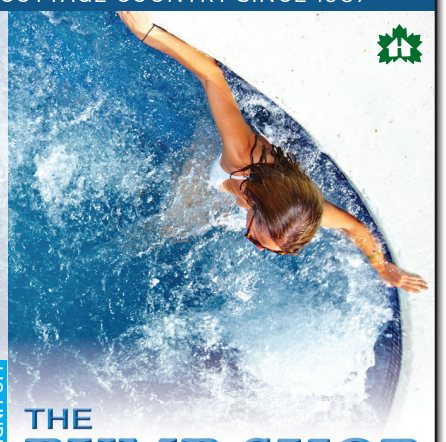
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INSIDE THIS WEEK:

HOME FROM KABUL
Greg Forgrave gives his parents the best Christmas present ever

MIGHTY MIDGETS
Highland Storm does hometown proud in prestigious hockey competition

ROBIN SPOTTED
Christmas Bird Count includes unofficial sighting of robin on December 31

THE ECHO
HALIBURTON COUNTY

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2007

VOL. 124 NO. 2 $1.25 INCL. GST

Fewer kids may lead to fewer teachers

JESSICA YOUNG
Staff Reporter

For the past few years, Archie Stouffer, Stuart Baker, J. Douglas Hodgson, Wilberforce and Cardiff elementary schools have noticed a three-to-four per cent drop in students and the secondary school will be feeling the effects this fall.

As a result of fewer children advancing through the grades, Haliburton Highlands Secondary School will notice a decline in Grade 9 student enrollment in September, possibly resulting in the loss of two teachers, says principal Gary Brohman.

"You never know about lay offs because there are teachers who take maternity leave or there will be some teachers who retire," Brohman says. "My hope is that nobody gets laid off, but with declining enrollment, that's a reality. Fewer kids means fewer teachers. We will probably lose two teachers next year."

Paul Doiron, superintendent of elementary and secondary school operations for Trillium Lakelands District School Board, is a bit more optimistic. "We probably don't have to lay off any teachers," he says

Doiron sees the fall in numbers as a reflection of the declining birthrate in Ontario and the county's older population.

"In most of rural Ontario, there has been a decreased birth rate. It has significance when younger folks are having fewer children. We know our society is aging. We have more boomers reaching retirement age than young people in the

See **Young families** *page 12*

CASEY LESSARD/Echo

Frosty the snow racer

Brayden Frost pushes his massive snowball into the lead in a race against his friends in the J Douglas Hodgson playground Monday. "Now that there's snow," Brayden said, "it's awesome because we got to do our annual snowball race." He and his friends were only able to have their race after about 10 cm of snow fell overnight. The snowfall was an answer to the prayers of many in the area whose businesses rely on traditional winter conditions for tourist dollars.

Snowbirds flock to MP's passport clinic

GREG HOEKSTRA
Staff Reporter

Well over 100 people turned out last week for a passport clinic hosted by local MP Barry Devolin – many in anticipation of looming travel restrictions slated to take effect two weeks from today.

As of January 23, any Canadian hoping to fly to the United States will require a passport. What's more, within two years' time, the same requirements will be extended to those crossing the border by both land and sea.

Devolin says the new requirements, which are part of a larger American initiative to prevent terrorism, have prompted more Canadians than ever to apply for a passport, which has created delays and setbacks in Passport Canada offices.

"They're running more than double their normal rate, and the line ups at some passport offices are hours long," he says.

Deborah Flood, who brought her 17-year-old son Brad to Thursday's clinic to apply for his first passport, says the U.S. regulations were the sole factor that drove her to visit last week's clinic.

"We don't travel there often but Brad's father lives down there so we need to be able to get back and forth just in case," she says.

Richard Burns of Haliburton has had a passport before but he too agrees that, at this point, his only reason for needing a passport will be in case he decides to venture south of the border.

"I just thought I might be doing a little travelling to the States soon," says Burns, following the principle that it's

See **Heavy demand** *page 5*

GREG HOEKSTRA/Echo

It's estimated that more than 100 people, including Jack and Loretta Billings of Gooderham, turned out last Thursday for a passport clinic in anticipation of new rules for entering the U.S..

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TWELVE MILE LAKE ROAD $1,995,000

A RARE FIND! 1677 feet of frontage and 6+ acres fronting on both beautiful Twelve Mile Lake and Little Boshkung Lake. This point lot is totally private and takes in multiple exposures and has stunning lake views. The historic "Strathcona Lodge" was located here. The original foundation is still present and has the potential to be built on. Two small historic cabins are also on the subject property. Don't miss this opportunity to build your dream home or getaway on one of the most peaceful settings in Haliburton County.
Price is plus HST

WENONA LAKE ROAD $799, 000

Looking for privacy in a large, spacious home on a year-round road, close to Haliburton Village? Stop looking! This amazing 4+bed/3 bath home on 50+ acres has everything you need. Warm wood finishes welcome you into a large eat-in kitchen, highlighted with the character and charm of an antique wood cookstove. Pantry for added storage. Two living rooms provide space for the whole family. A large garage with commercial size door offers amazing opportunities for the mechanically inclined. Hardwood forest with pretty trails for outdoor adventures. Enjoy more of the outdoors with Wenona Lake boat launch minutes away.

UNICORN ROAD $549,000

Your opportunity for a secluded, peaceful off grid Haliburton retreat is here! This 237 acres is the perfect destination to enjoy nature's natural beauty. Fantastic trails throughout the property. Nestled amongst the trees with a tranquil view of one of the many ponds, is a cute 22 x 22 cabin. The wood finishings throughout creates a warm and cozy feeling. Settle in and warm up in front of the wood burning stove. 24 x 24 detached garage is the ideal building to store all of your year round toys. Quick access to amenities in Haliburton Village and cell service throughout the property keeps you in the loop while enjoying your escape from the hustle and bustle.

KAWAGAMA LAKE $279,000

Stunning south views across the lake. This property has a fantastic shoreline of mixed sand/ gravel gradual entry to the water. Hydro is at the lot line and there is good cell service. This is easily accessible from either marina on the lake. Enjoy this affordable lot in the summer while you make your plans for your new cottage. Great fishing year-round and fantastic snowmobiling in the winter.

NEW LISTING
IRONDALE RIVER $695,000

Indulge in peace and serenity with this stunning extensively renovated, open concept four season riverfront dream home or cottage getaway. Vaulted ceilings, windows with a view and white-washed pine walls, this welcoming space is filled with natural sunlight. Incredible sunset views lead to cozy evenings entertaining in the new gourmet kitchen or unwinding with a view in the soaker tub. There is plenty of room to accommodate guests with the den in use as a 3rd bedroom. Walkout to the deck and multiple seating areas will greet you with plenty of privacy and beautiful landscaping on this well treed lot. Make this cottage your own and spend summer days swimming and kayaking down the river, and the winters exploring this natural wonderland.